

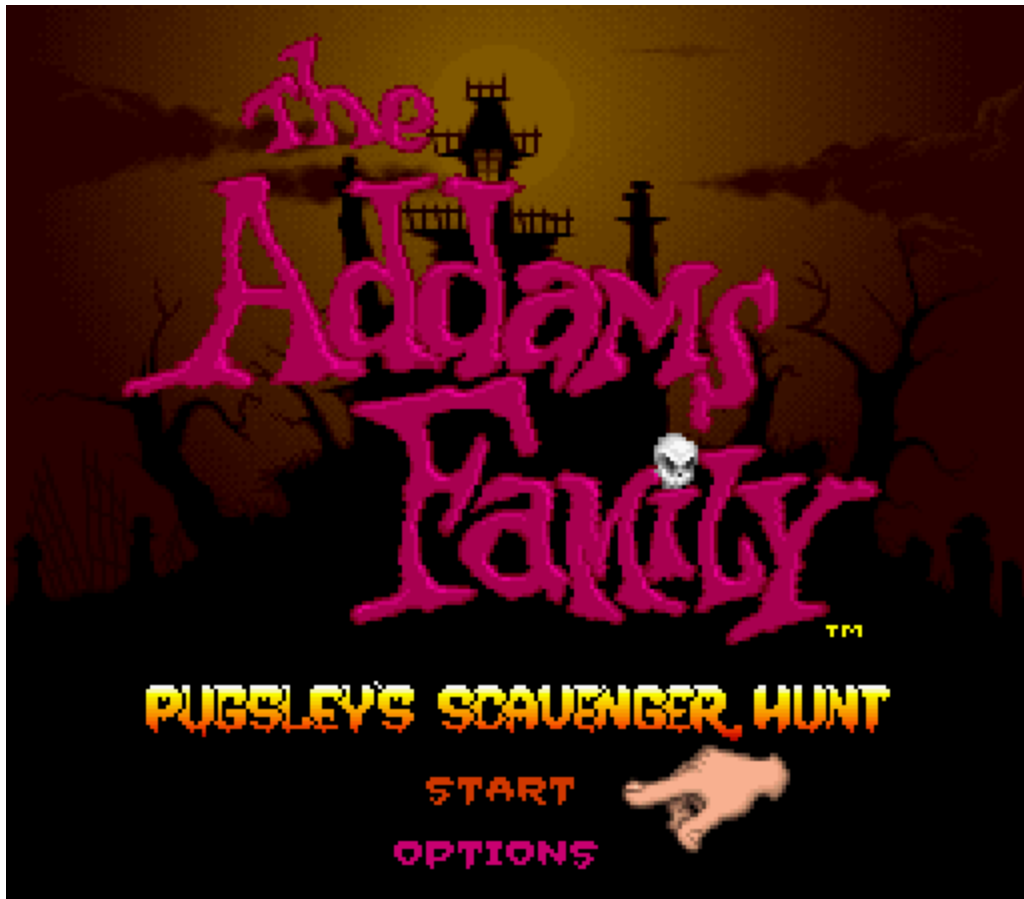
Somebody... down there... likes me!

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

Ocean's pixely Addams Family homage had barely cracked open and escaped from the musty crypt when the same dream team - James Higgins, Warren Lancashire, Simon Butler and Jonathan Dunn - began CPR-ing the follow-up into shape.

Approaching the culmination of an onerous seven days a week, four-month, whirlwind development cycle - just six months longer than allowed for with the first game - the rug was pulled from under the leading man, making Ocean's Addams Family 2 more of a spin-off than a true continuation.



As graphician, Warren Lancashire, explains in Retro Gamer issue 75, "For the sequel, I did a new Gomez sprite in a fetching purple waistcoat, but in the final two weeks of development, marketing decided they wanted one of the kids to be the focus of the game, so Simon created the Pugsley sprite in record time."



Thus Gomez's delightfully dim-witted cherub descendent stepped up to the plate to seize the limelight, while sister, Wednesday, instigated the plot. 'Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt' for the SNES, released in February 1993, was the result of their unholy union. Not like that. *That* would just be inappropriate, even for a family as bizarre as the Addams'.

Based on the 1992 Hanna-Barbera cartoon that ran for 21 episodes and two series, rather than the 'Values' movie sequel, the second Ocean Addams Family game was targeted towards a younger audience. As such, the story was kept simple and family-friendly. On the *surface* anyway.

Wednesday challenges Pugsley to locate, within the confines of the Addams mansion, six kooky objects, representing your prize for completing each of the six levels.



Our motivation for playing the game appears to have been very loosely borrowed from the premise of episode 12 of the cartoon, entitled 'Addams Family PTA'. This revolves around Morticia organising a scavenger hunt for Wednesday, Pugsley and their classmates in an attempt to engage more with her children, since they seem to prefer to spend time with anyone but her. Bigoted neighbour, Normina, considers the mansion a death trap so pulls out the stops to put the kibosh on the event supposedly to protect the kids.

In the cartoon the sought objects include a charred man in a trench-coat (in other words, Fester), a pile of fingernail clippings (belonging to Thing it emerges), a genuine Alaskan igloo, item number 34 is a really big shower cap (Cousin Itt's as it turns out), molasses, "those funny things that used to grow on Uncle Fester's feet", and a thorny vine (cue a scene straight out of Little Shop of Horrors).

In the game, we never establish which six of these are the chosen items, as the plot device is quickly forgotten and swept under the bear rug.



In *theory* at least, no-one is in peril. In *practice*, *everything* is alive and out to get you. For a degenerate tribe of sadomasochists, you'd imagine this wouldn't be of much concern, except of course, it *is* because that's how video games work.

By the time development commenced on the true movie sequel gaming adaptation, the original crew had been assigned to other equally eccentric projects. Namely, the DC Comics 'Game That Wasn't', Lobo. Instead, an entirely different Ocean team took care of the Addams Family Values translation released in 1995 for the SNES and Mega Drive.



Analogous to the pre-Addams movie-cartoon revival, Fester's Quest, for the arcade and NES courtesy of Sun Electronics Corp., it's a top-down, light RPG, again with Uncle Fester at the helm. Like Zelda, the emphasis is on action, not stat-crunching character-building. In Ocean's interpretation, the hero is entrusted with rescuing baby Pubert (moustachioed son to Gomez and Morticia) from Fester's 'black widow' other half, Debbie Jellinski, as opposed to fending off an alien invasion, as in Fester's Quest.



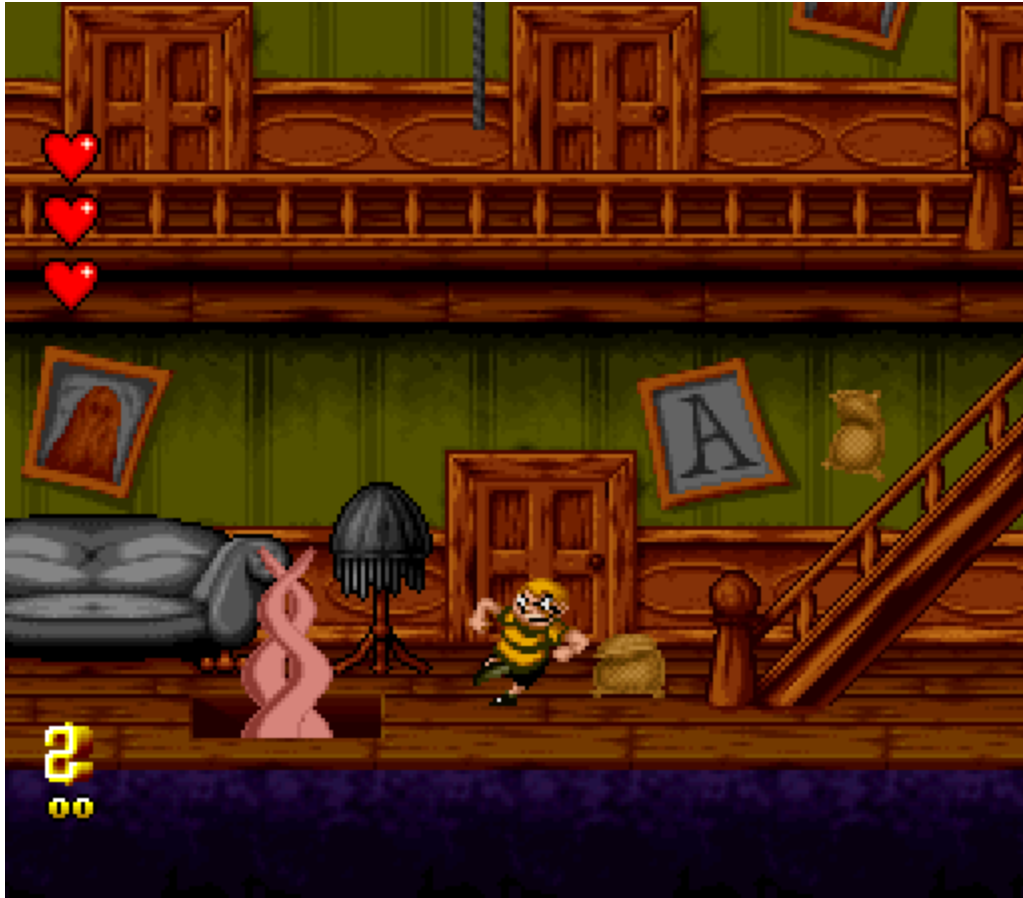
Like Addams Family 1 it was largely well-received; a resounding testament to the talent of its progenitors, abruptly thrust into the shadows of much better established, more popular Nintendo franchises. They were playing with fire, but *absolutely* ready for Nibbly Pig!

As review-worthy as it is, 'Values' will have to wait. This is *Pugsley's* moment in the sun... whether the moon-worshipping tyke likes it or not. Alright, one more picture, but you're just a text-divider, OK?



With no downtime between the first and second releases, there was *bound* to be some crossover. For some, the games were too close for comfort. Had they not been produced by the same team, for the same publisher, you might accuse them of committing a sprite-swapping blatant rip-off.

A yellow and green striped Pugsley - to mirror his cartoon manifestation - begins his adventure following in the footsteps of daddy dearest... in the foyer dominated by a series of antediluvian, winding stairs. Again, this hub comprises our means of level selection. Four doors are accessible to us from the outset, the other two remaining an enigma until the prerequisites have been met.



In contrast to the first title, the reduced number of themed stages and forcibly restrictive route through them makes for a more linear, shorter, albeit exceedingly more perplexing game.

In conversation with Super Play magazine shortly before the release of Scavenger Hunt, programmer, James Higgins, revealed that this pivotal swing was the result of a deliberate design choice following feedback received with regards to Addams Family 1...

"The one thing we had in our minds, though, was that the first game was a bit too easy - it was tricky to start with, but wasn't a real challenge. Because of that, we've actually ended up with a tougher game in the new

Addams - it's not so open-ended, so you have to complete some sections before you can go on to others.

It's also quite bloodthirsty, which it's possible Nintendo might object to. They're play-testing the game at the moment. They may not like the washing machine end-of-level boss either - it throws bras and things out at you, which raised a few eyebrows there!"



He needn't have worried; Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt earned their 'original Nintendo seal of quality' regardless. In any case, a strange choice for a guardian skirmish you might imagine, though this I'd hazard a guess is Ocean's colourful salutation to the cartoon's fixation on underwear.



In this re-imagining, the Addams Family live next door to a bitter, conniving underwear company boss, his wife, Normina, and contrastingly tolerant and reasonable son, N.J.

Norman Normanmeyer - a character somewhat based on American comedian Paul Lynde - is a real busybody who wants - at any cost - to be rid of their perfectly normal, lovable yet misunderstood neighbours. His wife is similarly prejudiced.

As always there's the equivalent of a class divide predicament to contend with, occupying a sizeable chunk of the story arc. This and a whole lingerie shop-full of underduds-related shenanigans.

Shrug

Don't look at me, / didn't write it. With so many references to pants, I wouldn't be surprised if Dominic Diamond's name crops up in the credits though.



Once again, the zenith of each level is flag-poled with an imaginative boss battle, such as the encounter with a giant (already injured) octopus with oscillating tentacles. This was transplanted directly from the cartoon, though the inclusion of similar pets dates back as far as the black and white TV show from the '60s.



In the original 1964 live-action TV series Wednesday owns a soft toy in the same sea-life guise - it can be spotted displayed on her bed in 'The Addams Family Goes to School'. Aristotle - a 'real' octopus - can also be seen playing the part of Pugsley's aquarium-bound pet.

In the 1973 cartoon, Hanna-Barbera perpetuated the octopi action by introducing land-wandering family pet, 'Ocho'. He also appears in the Gold Key comics.

Another level wraps up in a fairytale altercation with a fire-breathing dragon, who disperses his raining flame projectiles like discharged napalm. Dragons are the good guys in the Addams' world so this one must have lost the plot and turned rogue.



N.B. Not to be confused with Snappy the alligator, the Addams' shy family pet.

Our journey to these capstone clashes will likewise be familiar to fans of the first game. Certain graphical assets and enemies are recycled, as is the iconic main audio track composed (and remixed) by the ever-impressive, Jonathan Dunn.

Specifically, the canons and ride-able cannonballs, deadly swaying pendulums, plummeting maces and waddling, spiked helmets all drop in for cameo appearances. Some remain unchanged, while others function identically despite undergoing a makeover.

Mechanics too make a comeback. Hearts serve as our three-hit (non-upgradeable) energy indicator, and dollar signs can be collected to earn points and rejuvenate our health status (25 for an extra heart and 100 for a bonus life).

As in the Amiga version of Addams Family 1, Pugsley is weaponless, hence forced to deploy his trusty backside to squish enemies Mario-style. Of course, SNES Gomez was additionally armed with power-up golf balls or a fencing foil, taking advantage of the system's extra fire buttons.

Wall-manipulating switches activated with a well-timed headbutt still form the basis of the puzzle strategy. Some consequences are immediately apparent, while others need to be identified and exploited off-screen to appreciate their benefits. A slightly less subtle option is to detonate nuisance blocks with a TNT plunger... in recognition of Fester's penchant for blowing himself up in the cartoon.



Secret passageways, pick-ups and hidden blocks pepper the environment once more, accentuating the replay value.

Because this presents the player with multiple routes to complete each level, the gauntlet is laid down for speed-runners. 'ColonelFatso' currently holds the record at 13 minutes 53 seconds, a feat accomplished in honour of the Games Done Quick Doctors Without Borders charity event hosted in 2017.

Through his efforts we learn that jump buffering, damage boosting and wall jumping are all possible in Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt. Also that it contains no 'zips'.



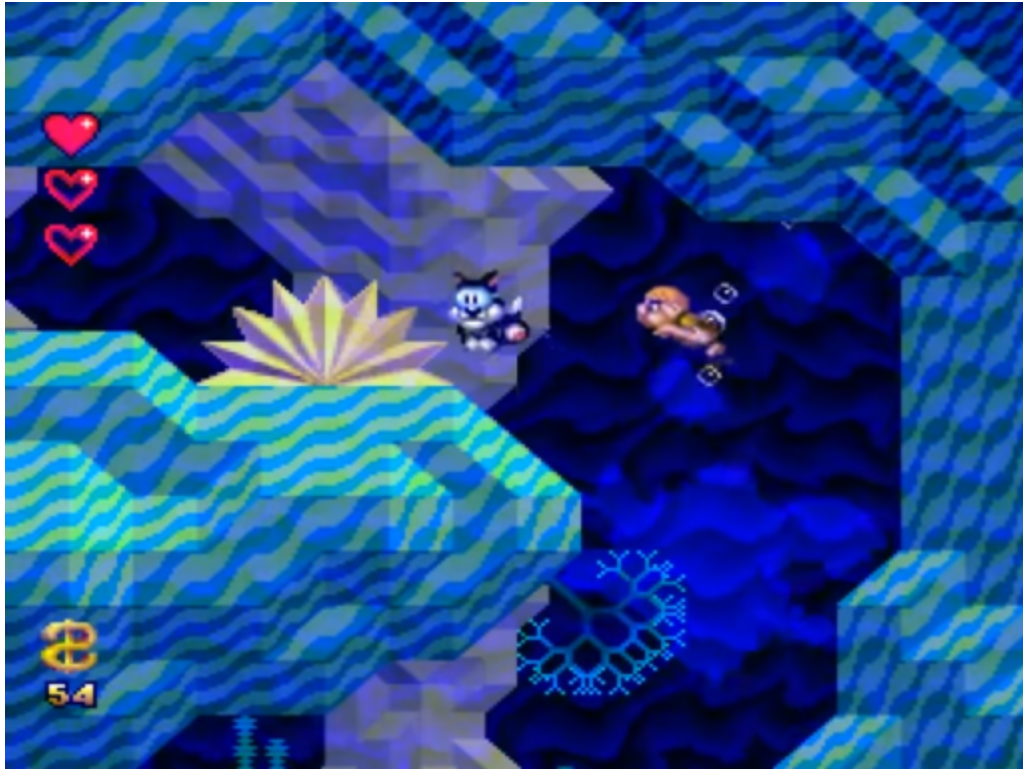
Attention to detail is on an equal footing between Addams Family 1 and Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt, nowhere more evident than in the intricate, pseudo 3D, parallax scrolling backdrops, and idle animations. In our current outing Pugsley rotates his owl-esque head into naturally impossible

positions, and nibbles on an ever-lasting pocket-sandwich whenever we neglect him for more than a few seconds.



Reminiscent of Addams Family 1, controls are deliberately loose with plenty of inertia to get to grips with, Pugsley screeching to a grating halt each time he switches direction. Jumping can be fine-tuned by holding/releasing the B button at variable intervals, and it's perfectly possible to revert direction in mid-air.

Underwater sections make an unwelcome return, adding cumbersome weight to your motion, slackening the pace. Incessantly meowing, bone-regurgitating, submerged cats are unique to Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt shockingly enough.



I'm still trying to fathom the significance to The Addams Family, so feel free to enlighten me. Maybe they're supposed to be 'Kitty Kat', the family's pet lion from the original TV show? Whatever the connection, random nonsense is fine by me.

Although more literal than random - and pertaining to the most recent cartoon (pre-2019) - it would have been nice to see pixelised interpretations of Fester's comic book alter-ego, Festerman, Thing (flying or otherwise), the Addams' Happydale Heights neighbourhood and Cousin Itt. In fact, *lots* of assets from the cartoon are sadly under-utilised.

As if Pugsley wasn't slippery enough, the refrigerator-generated, slidey ice platforms sabotage our handling further. Exacerbated by the addition of an optional run mode (activated with the SNES joypad's Y button). That's a feature you'll be engaging selectively no doubt.

Outflanking Addams Family 1's level design, certain novelty stages have been introduced. In one we play through the prism of Granny's fortune-telling crystal ball (she operates a psychic hotline in the cartoon). Being spherical this obscures our peripheral vision, making it harder to judge and react to upcoming threats.



Visually compelling all the same! This - in Super Play issue 2 (December 1992) - coder James Higgins informs us "you couldn't do on any other machine". The same is true of "the colour layering effect on the bubbles in the bathroom bit. I'd hate to have to do this one on Mega Drive now, that's for sure", he went on to divulge.



This would explain why the game wasn't ported to Nintendo's direct competitors, the Amiga and 16-bit SEGA console, while they were still viable, popular platforms.



To the coders amongst you, is he right?, or is the claim as dubious as the bottles of 'Canal no. 9' seen in the Addams Family's bathroom? How would *you* have accomplished this challenge? I think the demo-sceners, in particular, would take umbrage with this assumption.



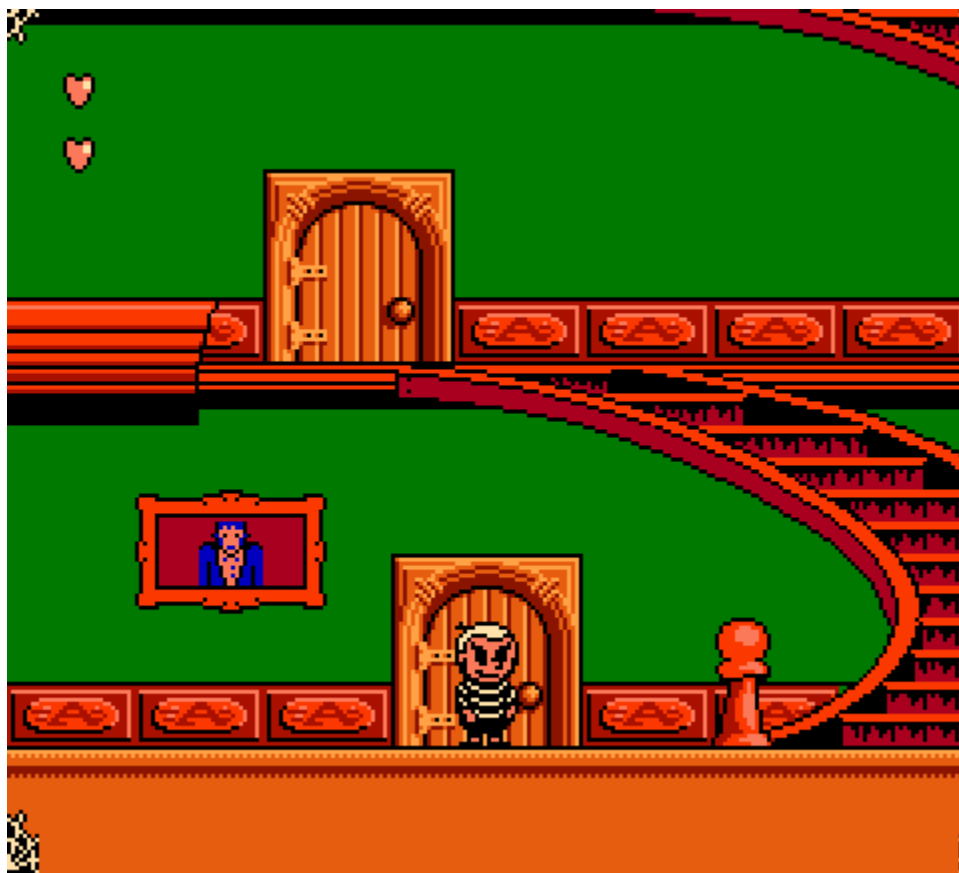
Elsewhere we wear a light bulb helmet, illuminating the way through the normally nebulous basement with impaired vision. This is one of Fester's more useful inventions, cobbled together in his lab and demonstrated on several occasions in the cartoon.



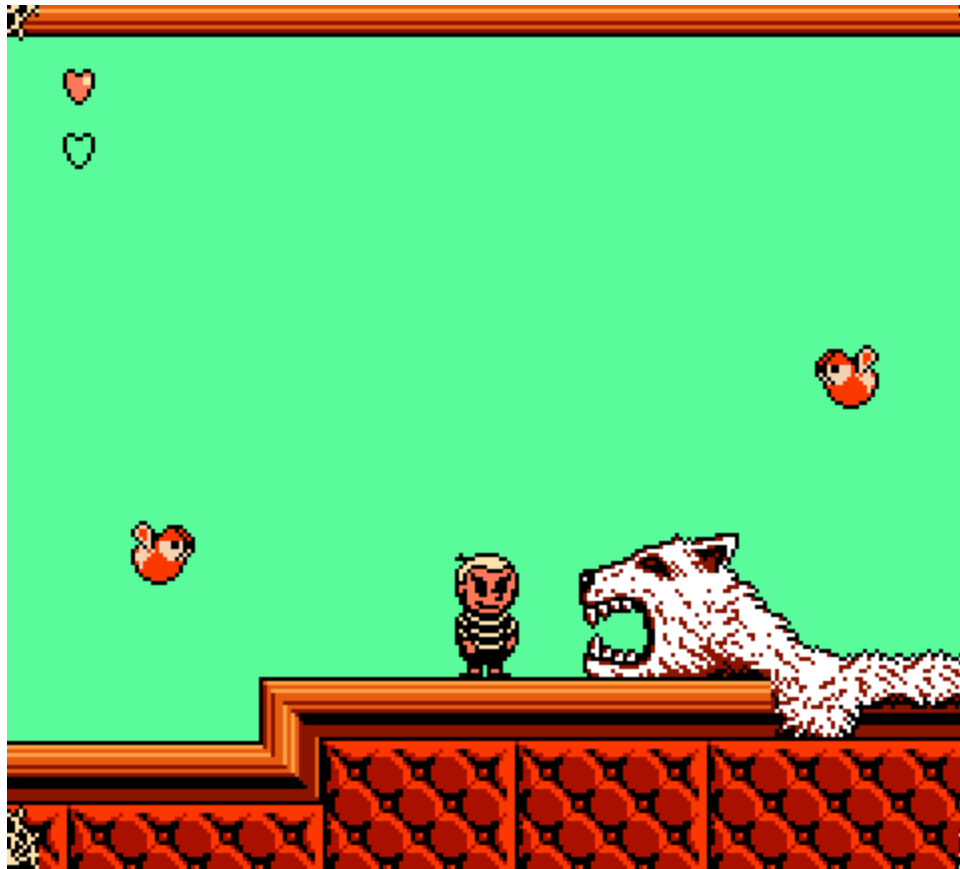
Also a chemical engineer of sorts, Fester concocts a magic shrinking potion, allowing us to traverse his lab in miniature. Another direct transposition from the cartoon, although the setting has been swapped. The attic and bathroom are *relatively* traditional fayre.



Perhaps owing to the games' comparative brevity and intended steeper difficulty curve, it was felt that a save game option or passwords were anathema to the cause. They didn't make the cut in the SNES version anyway; the NES and GameBoy editions both *support* a password system.



It's odd that the latter are actually retrofitted Addams Family 1 clones (facsimiles of the first game, yet adopting the second game's title and protagonist) since both of the low-end Nintendo platforms received ports of the original game from the outset.



Then again, applying logic and common sense to anything relating to the Addams Family would hardly be germane to the spirit of the franchise, now would it?

Even so, in the first game, Gomez is tasked with rescuing his kidnapped family so the title still kind of works. Except in Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt, the hunted objects are now Morticia, Granny, Fester, Wednesday, and so on.



I wonder how many short-changed, die-hard NES and GameBoy owners were tipped over the upgrade edge by the promise of a *true* Addams Family sequel. On the SNES it's an underrated platformer, sporting impeccable graphics, silky smooth animation and memorable audio. I won't mention that the finale amounts to a one-line text message since that's a bit of a *lowlight*.



Yet overall, a pleasant recurring trend in Cemetery Ridge it would seem; another licensed Addams Family title worthy of the much-loved franchise's legacy. A shame we had to wrap up on such a happy note really. I love a bit of misery.